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Report to Congressional Requesters

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FOOD SECURITY

Preparations for the 1996 World Food Summit



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National Security and
International Affairs Division

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The Honorable Nancy Landon Kassebaum
Chair

The Honorable Russell D. Feingold
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on African Affairs
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

The Honorable Tony P. Hall
House of Representatives

This report responds to your request that we monitor and analyze U.S. preparations for the World Food Summit to be held in Rome, Italy, between November 13 and 17, 1996.

This report addresses the following: (1) the origin, purpose, and financing of the summit; (2) the process used by member countries of the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) to prepare and negotiate a policy declaration and plan of action for approval by world leaders or their representatives; (3) the U.S. approach to the summit; (4) key issues that have arisen in the negotiations; and (5) the role and views of nongovernmental organizations (NGO).

FAO was founded in October 1945 with a mandate to raise levels of nutrition and standards of living, to improve agricultural productivity, and to better the conditions of rural populations. FAO is the largest autonomous agency within the United Nations. It has 174 member nations plus Puerto Rico (associate member) and the European Community (member organization) and more than 2,000 professional staff. FAO's biennial budget is set at \$850 million, and FAO-assisted projects attract more than \$2 billion per year from donor agencies and governments for investment in agricultural and rural development projects.

Background

Food security is concerned with hunger and malnutrition. The U.S. position paper prepared for the World Food Summit states that food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life.

Food security has several important dimensions: (1) availability—achieved when sufficient supplies of food of appropriate quality are consistently available to all individuals; (2) access—ensured when households and all individuals in them have adequate resources to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet; and (3) utilization—refers to the proper biological use of food through adequate diet, water, sanitation, and health care.

According to the U.S. position paper, world food security is important to the United States for humanitarian, economic, and national security reasons. The United States and other nations that signed the 1974 World Food Conference Declaration agreed that all governments should accept the goal of achieving world food security within 10 years. More than 20 years later, the world still falls far short of this goal. Eighty-eight countries are currently classified as low-income and food-deficit states. According to FAO, close to 800 million people, or 20 percent of the developing world's population, are chronically undernourished. Most of these people are in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, millions of other people in more affluent societies do not have enough food to meet their basic needs. And millions more experience prolonged hunger during part of the year, or suffer birth defects, growth retardation, mental deficiency, lethargy, blindness, or death because they do not have the diversity of food necessary to meet their total needs. An estimated 200 million children under the age of 5 suffer protein or energy deficiencies.

The world has made some important progress toward reducing food insecurity. For example, according to FAO estimates, 35 percent of people in developing countries were chronically malnourished in 1969-71, but only 20 percent were by 1990-92. However, FAO has projected that, unless the root causes underlying food insecurity are addressed by 2010, 700 million to 800 million persons worldwide will still be chronically undernourished. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, FAO projects that the chronically undernourished will increase from about 200 million to more than 300 million people in the next 15 years. Most of the rest of the chronically undernourished will be found in South Asia.

Poverty is a primary obstacle to food security. Worldwide, 1.3 billion people, or nearly one-quarter of the world's population, live on less than \$1 a day. Their low income makes them especially vulnerable when prices for basic commodities increase rapidly and sharply. Other important factors affecting food security include weather, civil strife and war, widespread unemployment or underemployment, inadequate returns to

food producers, unsustainable use of natural resources, high-debt service, overvalued exchange rates, and distorted international markets.

Future Outlook

In 1996, world grain stocks reached a 20-year low and grain prices reached an all-time high,¹ and world food aid has been in a sharp decline. Food insecurity and food aid problems could increase significantly over the short, medium, and long run. There are several reasons why this is so.

Although population growth rates have been declining, the world's population is expected to increase by 2.6 billion people by 2025. As a result, even with modest income growth, world food supplies will have to at least double by that year, according to the World Bank.² The Bank concludes that due to land and water constraints, future increases in food supplies must come primarily from increasing yields, rather than from area expansion and more irrigation. This would require a doubling of current yields over the next 30 years, which is uncertain.

An October 1995 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS) study³ found that world food aid needs will nearly double over the next decade simply to maintain current consumption levels. This is true even if one makes reasonably optimistic assumptions about recipient countries' ability to produce their own food or to import food commercially. Far higher food aid levels would be required if the target was to meet minimum nutritional standards. The study concluded that there is a looming mismatch between food aid resources and needs. If global food aid budgets are maintained at 1995 levels, the gap between needs and resources will grow rapidly. Factors limiting food aid availabilities include changes in agricultural policies that will likely reduce agricultural surpluses and reductions in aid budgets of donor countries. According to the study, funding will be the major factor affecting food aid shipments in the future. It noted that recent governmentwide budget reductions in the United States and in some other countries have already resulted in significant reductions in food aid donations. For example, food aid shipments of grain by donors peaked at 15.2 million metric tons (mmt) in 1992-93, declined to 12.6 mmt in 1993-94, and were estimated to have declined to 8.4 mmt in 1994-95. U.S. shipments peaked at 8.5 mmt in

¹Grain prices have moderated in recent months. See also footnote 4.

²Alex F. McCalla, *Agriculture and Food Needs to 2025: Why We Should Be Concerned* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, Oct. 1994).

³Food Aid Needs and Availabilities: Projections for 2005 (Washington, D.C.: USDA Economic Research Service, Oct. 1995).

1992-93 and were estimated to drop to 4.2 mmt by 1994-95. These reductions have already affected the food security of at least some recipient countries.

According to many experts, other factors affecting the future of world food security include the following:

- Many major agricultural producers, including the United States, Canada, Australia, and the European Union, are implementing increasingly more market-oriented agricultural policies, partly in response to the 1994 Uruguay Round trade agreement of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). More market-oriented policies are likely to result in a reduction of agricultural surpluses and in less grain held in stocks, particularly in government-held stocks. Lower average stocks, in turn, may lead to more year-to-year volatility in grain markets.⁴ Current U.S. agricultural policy removes the link between income support payments and farm prices. As a result, incentives for surplus agricultural production are diminished. U.S. government-held stocks are likely to decline sharply.⁵
- Although signatories to the 1994 Uruguay Round trade agreement agreed to establish mechanisms to ensure that implementation would not adversely affect food aid commitments to meet the legitimate needs of developing countries and stressed the need for sufficient food aid, the signatories were not specific on how this is to be accomplished.
- To the extent that trade liberalization results in slightly higher grain prices than without the agreement, food aid availabilities may be reduced because a given budget will purchase less grain.

Results in Brief

In 1994, the FAO Director General consulted with world leaders and others about whether it would be useful to hold a global conference on world food security issues, the first since 1974. According to U.S. officials, initially there was considerable skepticism on the part of the United States and a number of other countries. However, consensus eventually emerged on the desirability of renewing the 1974 commitment to achieve world food security for all and to agree upon effective policies and strategies for

⁴In September 1996, USDA's Economic Research Service concluded that relatively low stocks will persist through at least 1997 despite projected increases in upcoming global harvests that will ease immediate supply pressures. This will leave the world particularly vulnerable, it said, to major crop shortfalls or demand shocks, and will very likely mean more price variability than in the past.

⁵According to ERS, prospects for large-scale rebuilding of global grain stocks in the next few years are slim, given budgetary constraints and recent exporting countries' policies not to build stocks. Stock decisions will be increasingly made by the private sector, ERS said, and private stock holding will likely be substantially smaller than the large government stock levels of the 1980s.

dealing with the root causes of hunger and malnutrition in the 1990s and beyond. The consensus also included understandings that the summit would not establish new institutions for promoting food security or pledges from donor countries for increased levels of assistance and that the summit would be carefully planned to hold down costs.

The primary products of the summit are to be (1) a policy declaration containing seven major commitments for advancing global food security, approved by heads of state or their representatives and (2) a plan of action setting forth objectives and actions needed to implement the policy commitments. The FAO Secretariat prepared early drafts of the policy statement and plan. However, FAO member countries found the drafts unacceptable and took over the drafting process through the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).⁶ To facilitate reaching agreement, each member country government was encouraged to prepare its own position paper on food security issues. In addition, FAO regional conferences addressed the subject. Intensive negotiations to reach agreement on a final document were conducted between the end of July and the end of October, primarily in CFS. The intention was to secure agreement before the summit itself. During the summit, leaders would formally approve the policy declaration and deliver speeches on the subject.

U.S. preparations for the summit have been led by a high-level interagency working group consisting of 13 agencies and cochaired by USDA's Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, the Department of State's Under Secretary for Global Affairs, and the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The interagency group produced a U.S. government position paper on food security issues and collaborated with Canadian officials in drafting a joint "North America" position paper.

According to the United States, the primary responsibility for reducing food insecurity rests with each country, and it is critical that all countries adopt policies that promote self-reliance and facilitate food security at all levels, including food availability, access, and utilization. Furthermore, the

⁶The Committee on World Food Security is a Committee of the FAO's Council. It (1) continuously reviews the current and prospective demand, supply, and stock position for basic foodstuffs within the context of world food security; (2) makes periodic evaluations of the adequacy of current and prospective stock levels in aggregate, as well as in exporting and importing countries, to ensure a regular flow of basic foodstuffs and food aid to domestic and world markets in times of short crops or serious crop failures; (3) reviews steps taken by governments to implement an international undertaking on world food security; and (4) recommends such short-term and long-term policy action as may be necessary to remedy any difficulty foreseen in ensuring adequate cereal supplies for minimum world food security.

most important prerequisite for improving food security within a country is the development and implementation of an appropriate policy framework. Other key U.S. views include the following:

- All countries should promote trade because self-sufficiency in food is not sustainable in many countries.
- Governments should facilitate investments in infrastructure, invest in basic health and sanitary services, and develop institutions that promote sustainable development in a democratic and nondiscriminatory manner.
- Over reliance on resource transfers from developed to developing countries is detrimental to self-reliance and food security.
- The most progress in food security is achieved by nations that have pursued policy reform, macroeconomic stabilization, and structural adjustments.
- The United States plans to concentrate its assistance on countries whose national policies enhance food security.

According to U.S. officials, negotiations on a draft policy declaration and plan of action got underway in January 1996. By late July-early August, the discussions highlighted serious philosophical differences between developed and developing countries regarding the overall approach to food security and also among developed countries regarding trade and other more specific issues. As a result, the negotiations became difficult and protracted. From the perspective of U.S. goals for the summit, much of the discussion was (1) focused on government intervention rather than government facilitation; (2) protectionist rather than supportive of trade liberalization; and (3) too centered on international resource transfers rather than on national and private sector action to promote open markets, better natural resource management, and population stabilization.

A series of difficult and protracted bilateral and multilateral negotiations were held in September and October. Member countries finally reached agreement on text for a policy declaration and plan of action on October 31. Some specific examples of key differences that arose during the negotiations are as follows.

- Right to Food and Other Human Rights. Most countries were prepared to affirm that "every human being has the fundamental right to be free from hunger and malnutrition, . . ." language from the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which the United States is not a party. The United States was reluctant to endorse a "right to

food” because of concern within the Administration that the government might be opening the door to a possible lawsuit by malnourished individuals within the United States. In addition, the United States was not willing to endorse a right to food without language also endorsing other human rights. The final document affirms the right of everyone to be free from hunger but calls for work to clarify the right and better define the rights related to food and to propose ways to implement and realize these rights. The document also concludes that promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms is essential.

- Definition of Food Security. Developing countries sought to define food security narrowly in terms of hunger, malnutrition, and poverty versus a broader definition, favored by the United States and others, that included conflict avoidance and resolution, sustainable development, environmental protection, good governance, population stabilization, human rights, and open markets. Developing countries eventually agreed to define the term more broadly.
- Environment. The United States was concerned that the draft document did not pay sufficient attention to the importance of sustainable development. A U.S. proposal to include the term “environmental” into a list of policy frameworks—political, economic, and social—deemed essential to food security was not well supported by other countries. Developing countries were particularly concerned about their ability to meet environmental commitments and thus the possibility that developed countries could raise trade barriers to their food and agricultural exports. The United States was able to find several other places in the document where references to sustainable development and environmental issues were accepted by all countries. For example, the final document notes that environmental degradation contributes significantly to food insecurity and states that increased food production should happen within the framework of sustainable management of natural resources. At the same time, the international community and member countries commit to make every effort to ensure that environmental measures do not unfairly affect market access for developing countries’ food and agricultural exports.
- Population Stabilization. The United States and many other countries sought language committing countries to take population concerns into account when developing economic and social development plans. However, a very small but vocal group of developing countries insisted that there be no reference to population in the final document. Some countries were not willing to accept references to population planning or reproductive health services on the ground that such language endorses abortions. However, during the end of the October negotiating session, these countries agreed to accept language on population and reproductive

health with reference to the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development.

- Pledges for New Assistance and Role of Private and Public Investment. Notwithstanding the agreement that the summit would not be a pledging conference, developing countries sought commitments from donor countries to increase their levels of official development assistance and to resolve the external debt problems of the developing nations. The developing countries eventually agreed that specific commitments would not be made.
- Target Dates for Reducing/Eliminating Food Insecurity. The developing countries and others sought a commitment to reduce by one-half the number of chronically malnourished people by 2010 and to eliminate food insecurity within one generation. The United States and a number of other countries felt these targets were not realistic. Agreement was eventually reached on seeking to reduce the number of malnourished by one-half by 2015 and not cite any specific date for eliminating food insecurity.
- Trade Liberalization. The United States, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, with support from exporting Group of Developing Countries (G-77), sought agreement on language calling for further agricultural trade liberalization.⁷ Latin American and Southwest Pacific countries pushed for trade negotiations that would be based on the effective removal of subsidies and barriers that distort trade. However, China, Japan, and South Korea emphasized a need to protect domestic food production, and many delegations said that domestic production must increase and trade-restrictive measures were essential and valid to achieve this purpose. The final document essentially drops references to further trade liberalization beyond the Uruguay Round agreement and does not include language justifying trade protection.
- Implementation of the Marrakesh Decision.⁸ The 1994 GATT trade agreement included a written decision in which trade ministers agreed that during implementation of the agricultural trade reform program, appropriate mechanisms would be established to ensure that implementation of the reforms does not adversely affect the availability of food aid at a level that is sufficient to continue to provide assistance in meeting the food needs of developing countries, especially least-developed and net food-importing developing countries. Developing countries, with considerable support from most other countries, favored including

⁷G-77 countries are a group of developing countries that signed a joint statement in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1964 articulating members' collective interests in the areas of promoting economic cooperation among developing countries and in negotiating economic matters with developing countries. G-77 membership is now over 125 countries.

⁸The understanding was made in Marrakesh, Morocco, and is commonly referred to as the Marrakesh Decision.

language calling for early or full implementation of the agreement. The United States emphasized that it was too early for the reforms to have caused any measurable adverse effect and proposed language that the agreement would be effectively applied. Eventually, the United States agreed to full implementation within the World Trade Organization.

As with other recent international conferences, FAO sought wide participation by interested NGOs in preparations for the summit. Among other activities, NGOs were encouraged to work with their respective governments in expressing their views on food security. NGOs held regional forums to reach consensus on views that were provided to the FAO regional conferences. In September 1996, NGOs from numerous countries held a global consultation and reached consensus on a broad statement of key views that was provided to CFS for use in its negotiations on the policy statement and plan of action.

The NGO statement differed in a number of significant ways from the U.S. government's position on food security issues. For example, the statement did not fully subscribe to reliance on free markets, supported by self-sufficiency in food, and favored public regulation of food prices. In addition, NGOs did not fully endorse the view that countries should produce those things in which they have a comparative advantage and rely on trade to obtain those goods for which they lack a comparative advantage. According to the NGO statement, developing countries are often forced to import food from overseas, so their food security is subject to the vagaries of the international market. NGOs also concluded that international trade liberalization is not the solution to the problem of food security and in many cases undermines it.

U.S. NGOs were also active in preparations for the summit and interacted with the U.S. government in a variety of ways. Most importantly, they provided formal comments at two public forums held by the U.S. government and the U.S. and Canadian governments, respectively. In addition, a number of U.S. NGOs attended the global consultation, where they generally endorsed the key points statement issued by the NGOs in Rome. Some of the U.S. NGOs who participated actively in the preparations for the summit told us that they were disappointed with the U.S. government's process for securing and responding to their views. In general, they felt that the government waited too long before allowing them to comment on the drafting of the U.S. position paper, did not treat them as full partners in the process, and did not seriously consider many of their views. U.S. officials expressed surprise when advised about these

comments. They felt that ample opportunity had been provided to NGOs to participate in the process. Moreover, they said U.S. NGOs had generally showed little interest until the approach of a U.S.-sponsored public forum held in early June 1996.

Appendixes I through V provide additional information on these issues.

Agency Comments

We requested comments on a draft of this report from the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of State, and the USAID Administrator, or their designees. We obtained oral comments on November 1, 1996. Representatives of these agencies generally agreed with the information presented in this report but asked that we update our discussion of the negotiations to reflect developments through October 31, 1996. We did so. They provided their perspective on our discussion of the views of a number of U.S. NGOs concerning U.S. preparations for the summit. Their perspective is presented in this letter and in appendix V. In addition, they provided some technical comments, which we incorporated into the report where appropriate.

Scope and Methodology

Numerous federal agencies have been involved in the development of U.S. objectives for the World Food Summit. We identified the role played by each but concentrated especially on those agencies that are shown to have been the leading players. These were USDA, the Department of State, and USAID. We also attended several high-level interagency working group meetings. We monitored the September and late October negotiating sessions of CFS in Rome, Italy. We met with representatives of 17 U.S. NGOs that were actively involved in preparations for the summit and obtained their views.⁹ We also attended two open forums that USDA, State, and USAID held in June 1996, at which many NGOs commented on draft U.S. position papers. In addition, we observed the NGO global consultation in Rome.

We obtained and analyzed relevant studies, reports, and other documents from U.S. government agencies, as well as international organizations (primarily FAO, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and the World Bank) and private entities. In addition, we obtained testimonial

⁹They were the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Associates of the National Agricultural Library, Bread for the World Institute, CARE, Center of Concern, Coalition for Food Aid, Earthsave International, Harrison Institute for Public Law, Humane Society of the United States, Institute for Agriculture and Trade, Lutheran World Relief, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, National Farmers Union, Save the Children, U.S. Network for Habitat II, World Food Day, and World Sustainable Agriculture.

evidence from relevant U.S. government officials; officials of several foreign governments, FAO, the World Food Program, and World Bank officials; and other experts.

To describe the recent status of world food security and U.S. food assistance levels, we made use of data compiled by others, including U.S. government agencies such as ERS and USAID, and international organizations such as FAO and the World Bank. We did not make independent projections of world agricultural production or food security. Rather, we relied on a review and assessment of the results of studies conducted by other experts, as well as testimonial evidence by experts concerning such studies.

We conducted our review from May 1996 to November 1996 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

We are sending copies of this report to USDA's Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, the State Department's Under Secretary for Global Affairs, and the Administrator of USAID. We will also send copies to appropriate congressional committees. Copies will be made available to others upon request.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-4128. The major contributors to this report were Phillip J. Thomas, Gezahegne Bekele, and Wayne H. Ferris.



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Abbreviations

ACC	Administrative Committee on Coordination
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
ERS	Economic Research Service
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GNP	Gross National Product
G-77	Group of Developing Countries
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IWG	Interagency Working Group
MMT	million metric tons
NGO	nongovernmental organizations
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USTR	U.S. Trade Representative
WTO	World Trade Organization

Origin, Purpose, and Financing of the 1996 World Food Summit

During 1994 the Director General of the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) consulted a large number of heads of state and government and delegations from all global regions represented at FAO about whether it would be useful to hold a summit of world leaders to address global food security issues, the first since 1974. The Director General felt that the personal participation of heads of state and government was needed to mobilize all the government departments required to provide a comprehensive vision of the multiple dimensions of the food issue. In addition, it was expected that the high visibility of a summit would be more effective in raising awareness at the level of policy- and decision-making in the public and private sectors, as well as among the media and the public at large.

According to U.S. officials, initially there was considerable skepticism on the part of the United States and a number of other countries. For one thing, several summits on other issues had already been held or scheduled in the 1990s,¹ and successful summits require considerable preparation and involvement of high-level officials over a sustained period of time. Consequently, there was concern about whether governments would have sufficient energy and time to prepare for another summit, as well as the willingness to pay for the added expenses of both the preparations and a summit itself. For another thing, there was concern that a summit might simply become a vehicle whereby low-income, food-deficit countries would seek additional pledges of assistance from developed countries and not meaningfully address the root causes of food insecurity.

Eventually, the Director General found an emerging consensus on the desirability of convening a World Food Summit. Its purpose would be to renew the 1974 commitment to end hunger for all and to agree upon effective policies and strategies for dealing with the root causes of hunger and malnutrition in the 1990s and beyond. In October 1995, FAO members gave their unanimous approval to the Director General's proposal to convene the summit. During the preceding months, growing support for the summit had been confirmed by discussions at sessions of the FAO Council and FAO regional conferences, as well as by resolutions and recommendations adopted at numerous other intergovernmental meetings.

¹Among others, they include the International Conference on Nutrition (1992), U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea (1992), Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), U.N. Conference on Environment and Development (1992), World Conference on Human Rights (1993), International Conference on Population and Development (1994), World Summit for Social Development (1995), Kyoto Declaration and Plan of Action on the Sustainable Contribution of Fisheries to Food Security (1995), Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), and the Leipzig Declaration on and the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (1996).

FAO members agreed that the summit would not require monetary pledges from developed to developing countries, nor would it create new financial mechanisms, institutions, or bureaucracy. Each participating nation would consider independently how and what it might want to contribute to the implementation of the policies, strategies, and plan of action that would be adopted by the summit. Members also agreed that the summit would be carefully planned to keep costs to a minimum and at the same time ensure sound preparation in terms of physical arrangements and logistics; technical and policy documents; and consultation with governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGO), and others. Some of the steps taken to hold down costs include the following:

- Regularly scheduled sessions of FAO's governing bodies, including members' regional conferences and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), were to be used to the maximum extent possible for summit preparations.
- The summit would be held in FAO's headquarters in Rome, using existing conference facilities and services, to avoid costs to both FAO and member nations resulting from holding such a meeting away from the headquarters.
- The organizational work was entrusted to a small group of professionals from various FAO departments, who will return to their normal work following the end of the summit. Permanent representatives of governments to FAO's headquarters in Rome would fully participate in the process.
- Maximum use was to be made of FAO's own expertise to prepare a comprehensive set of technical documents in advance of the summit, and the cooperation of other organizations was sought in their preparation.
- The basic costs of holding the summit were to be financed by FAO's regular program. However, voluntary contributions in cash and in kind have been sought to cover other costs, in particular, to encourage wide participation from developing countries and NGOs.
- All participants are being encouraged to avoid holding receptions and dinners during the summit and to donate any funds that would have been used for hospitality to the financing of a special program for food production in support of low-income, food-deficit countries.

In September 1996, the Secretary General for the World Food Summit told us that about \$2 million had been budgeted for the World Food Summit for 1996 to cover the costs of such things as pay for staff detailed from FAO to

work on the summit and extra meetings.² She said the \$2 million would not cover all of the extra costs and that she did not yet know what the overall additional cost would be. However, the Secretary General said that a considerable amount of money had been saved by the use of the FAO's regular meetings and facilities to handle the summit.

²The Secretary General said that the Inter-Sessional Working Group meetings and the September CFS meeting were not considered regular meetings.

The Process of Preparing a Policy Statement and Plan of Action for Approval by World Leaders

The summit is to be held in Rome during November 13-17, 1996. The primary product of the summit is intended to be a policy declaration and plan of action on universal food security, for implementation by all parties concerned: governments, international institutions, and all sectors of civil society. The policy statement, to be signed by heads of state or their representatives, is to be a relatively brief, concise statement on the problem confronting the world and broadly stated commitments for addressing the situation. The plan of action is to be a longer document that sets out objectives and actions considered necessary to fulfill the commitments made in the policy declaration.

The process for preparing a policy statement and plan of action for approval by world leaders has included several major elements:

- drafting of a policy statement and plan of action document, initially by the Secretariat and subsequently by CFS or the Inter-Sessional Working Group;
- drafting by CFS members of individual countries papers to form the basis for positions that each country's government would advocate in negotiations leading up to the summit;
- discussion of the subject at FAO regional conferences, with suggestions and recommendations for the policy statement and plan of action forwarded to CFS;
- discussion of the subject by various forums of NGOs, with suggestions and recommendations for the policy statement and plan of action forwarded to member countries, the FAO regional conferences, or CFS; and
- negotiations on drafts of a policy statement/plan of action by CFS and its subordinate groups.

FAO Draft Policy Declaration and Plan of Action

In April 1995, well before the FAO's approval of convening a summit, the FAO Secretariat drafted what were referred to as possible elements of a draft policy declaration and plan of action for world leaders to sign at a summit. These elements were presented to and discussed by member countries at FAO meetings. In December 1995, the Secretariat prepared a draft policy statement/plan of action that sought to take account of the members' views. This draft was reviewed at a meeting of CFS from January 29 through February 2, 1996. The U.S. view was that the draft was generally acceptable in substance, but overly long and unfocused. Other CFS members were also not satisfied with the document. Member countries asked the Secretariat to prepare a revised draft document. CFS established an Inter-Sessional Working Group to conduct its work until its next scheduled meeting in September.

The Secretariat's revised draft was reviewed by the Inter-Sessional Working Group in March 1996. The group was still not satisfied with the document and decided to take over the drafting process. (Since then, the Secretariat has acted as technical adviser and facilitator in the drafting process.) A small committee that included the officers of the Inter-Sessional Working Group, known as the Bureau, was charged with preparing the next draft of a policy statement/plan of action.

In addition, FAO regional conferences, held between March and early July (for the Near East, Africa, Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean), also discussed the policies and priority actions needed to ensure food security in the member countries of the respective regions. To stimulate discussion on the issue, the Secretariat provided each conference with a paper on the food security situation and issues in its respective region. Each paper also included a proposed draft statement on actions for addressing regional food security, along with the Secretariat's observation that the conference could recommend its transmission to CFS as that region's contribution to the World Food Summit plan of action. In addition, the Secretariat provided the regional conferences with a copy of its March draft policy statement and plan of action.

The regional conferences provided member state governments with another vehicle for providing guidance to their Rome-based representatives on what they would like to see in a policy statement and plan of action.¹ It was hoped that the conferences would begin the process of building consensus that would lead to the eventual approval of a draft document by all CFS members.

Based on comments and amendments proposed by members of the Inter-Sessional Working Group at its May and June meetings, as well as consultations with Regional Chairs of CFS and individual members and observers of the Inter-Sessional Working Group, in early July the Bureau prepared a new draft policy statement and plan of action for discussion by the Inter-Sessional Working Group from July 29 through August 2, 1996. (See app. IV for a discussion of key issues that arose during negotiations between late July and the end of October 1996.)

¹A few of the regional conferences took unusual steps. For example, CFS members at the European conference refused to discuss the FAO Secretariat's draft of possible European actions to be recommended for the plan of action. The regional conference for Latin America and the Caribbean also chose to ignore the Secretariat's paper. Instead, it focused on a draft statement and plan of action that had been prepared in Rome by the Latin American representatives to FAO. Attendees agreed to adopt the Rome-produced document but to also include a nonconsensus appendix containing delegations' comments on the document.

U.S. Approach to the Summit

Key actions taken by the U.S. government in preparing for the summit include establishing a high-level interagency working group to oversee and guide the process, preparing a U.S. government position paper on the World Food Summit, preparing jointly with Canada a North American position paper on the summit, and inviting NGOs and the public more generally to provide input to the process.

As early as April 1995, the U.S. government designated the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as the lead agency for U.S. preparations for the summit and established a "core group" comprising representatives from USDA, the State Department, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to staff the issue. The U.S. National Secretary for the summit was a USDA official from the Foreign Agriculture Service, and he chaired the core group. According to U.S. officials, the group was not very active between then and the early part of 1996 but did help prepare positions on the FAO Secretariat's draft and subsequent draft policy action and plan of action.

In late March 1996, USDA's Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, with the approval of the Secretary of Agriculture, took action to expand the interagency process. The goal was to fully engage USDA and other agencies in addressing broad policy issues and preparing for the summit, including developing a U.S. country paper, providing regional coordination with Canada, securing input from the public, and establishing policy guidance for U.S. negotiators. A high-level Interagency Working Group (IWG) was established. Initially, it was cochaired by the USDA Under Secretary and the State Department's Under Secretary for Global Affairs. Subsequently, USAID's Administrator was designated as third cochair. IWG includes broad representation. In addition to the three cochair agencies, it has representatives from the Office of the Vice President, the National Security Council, the National Economic Council, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Defense, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the National Intelligence Council. As of October 31, 1996, IWG had met seven times.

At the same time, the interagency core group was expanded to include, on an as-needed and as-desired basis, staff at the working level to do much of the day-to-day work. The core group has met on a weekly basis and

prepared the various drafts of the U.S. country paper, the U.S. draft input into the North American paper, and positions for negotiations in CFS. Much of the core group work has been staffed by USDA, the State Department, and USAID. However, some other agencies have had considerable input on certain specific issues. For example, USTR has played a key role with regard to trade issues and the Department of Commerce with regard to world fishery issues.

The core group prepared a draft paper for discussion at the first IWG meeting on April 8, 1996. Based on comments received, the paper was substantially revised and was considered the first draft of the U.S. country position paper for the World Food Summit. The paper was discussed at the second IWG meeting on April 30. Thereafter, the draft went through additional revisions before being finalized in early July. The paper is entitled "The U.S. Contribution to World Food Security." During approximately the same period of time, members of the core group, with oversight by IWG, collaborated with Canadian officials in drafting a joint paper titled "Food Security Situation and Issues: A North American Perspective."¹ Both papers formed the bases for positions that the United States advocated in negotiations leading up to the summit.

Involvement of NGOs

As discussed in a later section, U.S. NGOs with an interest in food security provided comments to the U.S. government as it was developing the U.S. position paper and the joint position paper with Canada. In addition, they have participated in other activities designed to influence the content of the policy declaration and plan of action.

U.S. Position on Substantive Issues

The U.S. position paper, finalized in early July, and the U.S.-Canada North American paper, finalized in early August, formed the basis for positions that the United States has advocated in negotiations leading up to the summit. These papers summarize the U.S. analysis of the principal causes of food insecurity at the individual, household, local, national, and global levels and identify major actions that the U.S. government believes are needed to reduce food insecurity. The United States sought to persuade CFS and its various working groups to draft and adopt a policy statement and plan of action that is consistent with the U.S. overall assessment of the problem and actions needed to reduce food insecurity.

¹In conformity with FAO's regional organization, the term "North America" refers to Canada and the United States. Mexico is part of FAO's regional group for Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the U.S. view, food insecurity is a complex problem with multiple causes: natural disasters; war and civil strife; inappropriate national policies; poverty; barriers to trade; environmental degradation; excessive population growth; gender inequality; poor health; and inadequate development, dissemination, adaptation, and adoption of agricultural and other research and technology.

According to U.S. policy, the primary responsibility for reducing food insecurity rests with each country, and it is critical that all countries adopt policies that promote self-reliance and facilitate food security at all levels, including food availability, access, and utilization. Furthermore, the most important prerequisite for improving food security within a country is the development and implementation of an appropriate policy framework. The United States advocates the following national policies and actions to improve food security:

- Governments should act as facilitators rather than intervenors. National policies that facilitate the development of markets and expand the individual's freedom of action are the best guarantor of national food security. Such policies require transparency and the opportunity for full and meaningful participation in decision-making by all members of society. Governments should create and sustain a stable economic environment that is conducive to the full participation of the private sector and foster political stability without resorting to repressive measures. Governments should combat graft and corruption wherever it exists, especially in the political and economic systems.
- All countries should work to promote liberalized trade to maximize the potential for economic growth (within the context of sustainable development) and to realize the benefits of comparative advantage. Self-sufficiency in food production is not a viable or sustainable solution for many countries. Governments should provide a macroeconomic and trade environment with linkages to global markets so that long-term changes are transmitted to the domestic economy, thus avoiding macroeconomic imbalances that could induce destabilizing adjustments.
- Governments should invest in a public goods infrastructure that includes transportation, communication, education, and social safety nets. And it should provide basic health and sanitary services, maintain basic levels of nutrition, and facilitate voluntary population stabilization.
- Governments should ensure a political system that does not discriminate against women. All countries must recognize the essential role of women, who work to produce more than half of the food in developing countries.

Greater emphasis needs to be placed on child survival, family planning, and other reproductive health information and services.

- Governments should establish a general development policy that (1) does not discriminate against agricultural or fisheries sectors nor against rural or coastal areas and (2) recognizes that poverty alleviation requires an integrated approach to rural development.
- Governments should develop institutions and land tenure systems that provide broad access to land services and incentives for users to protect and invest in the long-term productivity of natural resources.
- All countries should promote the critical role of sustainable development in the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors, and these policies must be environmentally sound. Governments should adopt policies that provide an effective incentive structure for sustainable management of natural resources, including soil, water, and genetic resource management, and preservation of biological diversity. Food, agricultural, and fishery policies should be consistent with the resource endowment of the country and supportive of its natural comparative advantage.
- Greater emphasis needs to be placed on agricultural research and extension services. Governments should emphasize investment in agricultural research and technical education, international research systems, and policies that facilitate the flow of knowledge and technology among and within countries while protecting intellectual property rights so necessary to provide incentives for private sector research.

In the U.S. view, countries that have demonstrated the most progress in achieving food security are those that have seriously pursued policy reform, macroeconomic stabilization, and structural adjustment, while focusing government activities on public goods investment and the provision of safety nets. The United States believes that such commitment and assumption of responsibility at the national level create a climate conducive to private and public external investment. Consequently, the United States has said that it plans to concentrate its assistance efforts on those countries that are willing to review and change their national policies to improve their own food security. This approach is consistent with USAID statements in recent years that it is concentrating its assistance efforts on those countries that are partners in development and that can achieve sustainable development results. According to USAID, sustainable development cannot be achieved in countries that are not willing to change their policies, do not allow their own citizens to participate adequately in the development process, and have not invested their own resources in sustainable development or have invested a disproportionate amount in the military at the expense of development.

Actions Advocated by the United States to Assist the Food Insecure Countries

In September 1996, the United States advised other countries that in the U.S. view, the international community can play a catalytic role in helping food-insecure countries by providing development assistance and, where necessary emergency food aid. However, the United States said that an overreliance on resource transfers from the developed to the developing countries will only decrease, rather than enhance, self-reliance and the achievement of food security.

Consistent with the agreed-upon aims of the World Food Summit, during negotiations on the policy declaration and plan of action, the United States has opposed language that might be interpreted as requiring additional resource pledges by the developed countries or the creation of new financial mechanisms, institutions, or bureaucracies. This approach is also consistent with U.S. budgetary constraints and congressionally mandated reductions in foreign assistance expenditures. In addition, it should be noted that the United States is in arrears on its dues owed to the United Nations, and some of its specialized agencies, for example, FAO. According to U.S. officials to whom we spoke, OMB advised IWG that the United States was not in a position to make new resource commitments to food-insecure countries during the World Food Summit. These officials also said that many other developed countries also face a difficult budget environment and are also unwilling to consider new pledges during the summit.

Although the United States is not prepared to pledge additional resources at this time, the government has said that it intends to continue to play a major role in promoting food security around the world. According to the U.S. position paper, the United States plans to accomplish this objective by

- enhancing U.S. government support for research and technology development in agriculture and related sectors, both at home and abroad;
- employing an integrated approach to sustainable development, with a strong emphasis on those countries that show a good-faith willingness to adopt necessary policy reforms;
- continuing support for food security through the use of agriculture programs, development assistance, and food aid;
- continuing support for international efforts to respond to and prevent humanitarian crises that create a need for emergency food;

- continuing efforts to encourage and facilitate implementation of food security-related actions adopted at recent international conferences or established in recently agreed-to conventions;²
- working within the multilateral system to enhance global approaches to food security;
- working with all countries to achieve freer trade and to ensure that the benefits are equitably realized and urging all countries to open their markets in the interest of achieving greater stability and participation in the world market; and
- continuing to work toward food security for all Americans.

²During September 1996 negotiations on the policy declaration and plan of action, the United States supported inclusion of references to conclusions reached and action plans adopted at a number of recent international conferences and conventions. In the U.S. view, implementation of the goals of these conferences and conventions can make a significant contribution to global food security. For example, the 1992 U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, the 1992 International Conference on Nutrition, the 1994 U.N. Conference on Population, and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women emphasized sustainable national policies that would help promote global food security. At the same time, U.S. negotiators opposed language that would represent a significant retreat from the conclusions and goals of recent international forums.

Key Issues That Have Arisen During the Negotiations

The Inter-Sessional Working Group met from July 29 to August 2, 1996, to address the Bureau's revised policy statement and plan of action. According to U.S. officials,

- the discussions and negotiations highlighted serious philosophical differences between developed and developing countries regarding the overall approach to food security and also among developed countries regarding trade and other more specific issues;
- the session was largely an exercise in adding to the draft text and proposing specific language changes (by the end of the meeting, the text had increased to 40 pages and about 800 bracketed items (text on which consensus was lacking)); and
- much of the discussion was (1) disconcertingly focused on government intervention rather than on government facilitation; (2) protectionist rather than supportive of trade liberalization; and (3) too centered on international resource transfers rather than on national-level and private-sector action—including promotion of open markets, better natural resource management, and population stabilization—to encourage self-reliance and household food security.

Nonetheless, U.S. officials concluded the meeting was relatively productive, particularly because member country delegations came to the meeting prepared not only to discuss but also to negotiate, to a limited extent, the draft text. As a result, positions of the respective groups were tabled, an important prerequisite for negotiation.

On September 21, CFS met to further negotiate the draft document that had resulted from the late July-early August meeting.¹ The negotiations were lengthy and cumbersome, partly because of (1) the large number of bracketed text items that had to be addressed, (2) important substantive differences of views, and (3) language translation problems.

Although several substantive issues remained unresolved at the end of the round of negotiations on September 30, the U.S. view was that significant progress had been made. At the start of the informal negotiations, on September 20, CFS country delegations were working with a draft document of approximately 40 pages and 800 brackets of text. When the negotiations broke off, the draft documents had been reduced from

¹The September negotiations had originally been scheduled to last 5 days, with a goal of reaching full consensus on both the policy statement and plan of action. However, the negotiations were extended because of the large number of unresolved issues. Two days of informal negotiations were conducted prior to the scheduled start on September 21, and negotiations continued for another 3 days beyond the originally planned end date of September 27.

approximately 40 pages to 35 pages, and the roughly 800 bracketed items had been reduced to about 220.

Following a personal appeal by the FAO Director General, the FAO Council suspended part of its October session to permit a 2-day reconvening of CFS. CFS met on October 8-9 to seek additional consensus on bracketed points. The session was useful in removing some brackets and clarifying positions on remaining difficult issues. However, there was no movement on major issues.

On October 28-31, CFS met again with the avowed purpose of obtaining consensus on all remaining issues. In fact, the committee reached agreement on a consensus text to be submitted to heads of state or their representatives at the summit. It is up to each member country's government to decide whether to enter reservations or interpretations with regard to specific parts of the text. Governments have until November 13 to advise if they have any reservations or interpretations with regard to the text. A reservation means that a government does not agree with the passage cited. In an interpretative statement, a government explains its position with regard to the passage cited.

Broad Outline of an Overall Agreement

The agreed-upon text includes seven broadly stated commitments.

One: We will ensure an enabling political, social, and economic environment designed to create the best conditions for the eradication of poverty and for durable peace, based on full and equal participation of women and men, which is most conducive to achieving sustainable food security for all.

Two: We will implement policies aimed at eradicating poverty and inequality and improving physical and economic access by all, at all times, to sufficient, nutritionally adequate, and safe food and its effective utilization.

Three: We will pursue participatory and sustainable food, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and rural development policies and practices in high- and low-potential areas, which are essential to maintaining adequate and reliable food supplies at the household, national, regional and global levels, and combat pests, drought, and desertification, considering the multifunctional character of agriculture.

Four: We will strive to ensure that food, agricultural trade, and overall trade policies are conducive to fostering food security for all through a fair and market-oriented world trade system.

Five: We will endeavor to prevent and be prepared for natural disasters and man-made emergencies and to meet transitory and emergency food requirements in ways that encourage recovery, rehabilitation, development, and a capacity to satisfy future needs.

Six: We will promote optimal allocation and use of public and private investments to foster human resources, sustainable food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry systems, and rural development, in high- and low-potential areas.

Seven: We will implement, monitor, and follow-up this plan of action at all levels in cooperation with the international community.

Significant Issues That Emerged During the Negotiations

Key issues that arose during the July through October negotiations include the following.

Right to Food, Code of Conduct, and Respect for Human Rights

The draft policy statement contained bracketed text affirming that "every human being has the fundamental right to be free from hunger and malnutrition." The phrase "right to be free from hunger" is from the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which the United States is not a party. The language was originally introduced into the draft policy statement and plan of action at the request of FAO. At the request of the United States, this language remained bracketed at the end of the September negotiations. The United States preferred language from the U.N. Universal Declaration on Human Rights, which states that "every human being has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself (herself) and family, including food." However, it deserves noting that in 1974 the United States endorsed the World Food Conference's Declaration, which proclaimed that "every man, woman, and child has the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition."

U.S. officials told us that when it comes to endorsing human rights, the United States prefers to focus on political rights, such as free speech and religion, rather than on things over which governments have less control,

such as food, housing, water, and so forth. For example, one official said, the U.S. government has for decades subscribed to the “aspirational goal” of everyone’s right to be free from hunger but does not “guarantee” such a right to every citizen. According to another U.S. official, the United States vests rights to pursue objectives (such as to develop to one’s full potential) rather than rights to objects (such as food and housing). Governments alone are not the only actors who provide things to people. Most people in society secure food either by growing it themselves or purchasing it in the marketplace. Policies are needed that allow people to pursue their basic needs. In the United States you cannot simply say that people have a right to housing or food, the official said. Rather, people have a right to protection that enables them to pursue their basic needs.

The United States has also been reluctant to endorse a “right to food” because of concern within the Administration that the government might be opening the door to a possible lawsuit by undernourished individuals within the United States.

The September negotiations scarcely discussed the right-to-food issue because the proposed language appeared in the policy declaration, and the declaration was only negotiated briefly at the end of the CFS session. Most of the negotiations concerned language in the plan of action. The September draft plan of action also proposed that FAO and the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights should better define or clarify what a “right to food” means and propose ways to implement the right. One bracketed suggestion would require that FAO and the Commissioner consider the appropriateness of formulating an international code of conduct for implementing the right to food.

In the U.S. view, any consideration of endorsing a right to food and a code of conduct needed to occur within the context of references to other human rights. During the September negotiations, some countries opposed including language affirming “respect for human rights.” A State Department official told us that if other countries were not willing to endorse other important human rights, it would not make sense for the United States to agree to endorse a right to food. The official indicated that the United States would be prepared to see the summit not go forward if agreement could not be reached on this point.

The completed text agreed to by CFS at the end of October reaffirms the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to

be free from hunger. The document also states that promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development and the progressive realization of the right to adequate food for all, is indispensable to the goal of achieving sustainable food security for all. The final document drops specific reference to a code of conduct. However, members stated their objective to clarify the content of the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, as stated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. More specifically, they invited the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, in consultation and collaboration with others, to better define the rights related to food and to propose ways to implement and realize these rights as a means of achieving the commitments and objectives of the World Food Summit. In addition, the document specifically noted that some countries are not parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

According to the U.S. Permanent Representative to FAO in Rome, the United States is pleased that the final document recognizes the importance of all human rights and recognizes the need to further clarify what is meant by rights related to food as stated in the covenant. In his view, since the United States is not a party to the covenant, the United States is likely to file an interpretive statement indicating that the document's objectives and actions relating to the covenant do not apply to the United States.

On a related issue, the final text affirms that food should not be used as an instrument for economic and political pressure. It specifically underscores the importance of international cooperation in refraining from unilateral measures consistent with the international law and the Charter of the United Nations. This language was the result of a compromise essentially between Cuba, Iran, Iraq, and Libya on the one hand and the United States on the other hand.

Conflict Avoidance and
Conflict Resolution;
Democracy and Good
Governance; and Open
Markets

During the July negotiations, many developed countries proposed that open markets and representative democracy were the best foundations for sustainable food security, but many developing countries responded that poverty and underdevelopment were problems that required eradication before the developing world focused on institution-building. Concepts of democracy, conflict avoidance and resolution, peace, and responsibility of governments were quickly bracketed, and G-77 group repeatedly accused the industrialized countries of the Northern Hemisphere of trying to impose their ideas on the less developed countries of the Southern

Hemisphere. Further, G-77 sought to delete the term “political” from the commitment, calling on governments to ensure “an enabling political, social and economic environment, designed to achieve the best conditions for the reduction of poverty and durable peace.”

In September 1996, the United States and many other countries supported language for the plan of action whereby countries would commit to ensuring a “democratic” political environment and “good governance.” However, they were opposed by countries from G-77 and China. As a result, the draft policy statement contained bracketed text affirming support for democracy and good governance. The United States considered this a major unresolved issue.

The completed text agreed to by CFS at the end of October includes the following objective: To prevent and resolve conflicts peacefully and create a stable political environment, through respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, a transparent and effective legal framework, transparent and accountable governance and administration in all public and private national and international institutions, and effective and equal participation of all people, at all levels, in decisions and actions that affect their food security.

Environment

Another major issue from the perspective of the United States had to do with sustainable development and environmental concerns. The United States was concerned that the July 1996 draft document did not pay sufficient attention to the importance of sustainable development. Initially, developing countries were reluctant to include proposed additions to the text on this matter. In addition, when the U.S. delegation sought to insert the term “environmental” into a list of policy frameworks—political, economic, and social—deemed essential to food security, most other countries were not supportive. However, the United States was able to find places in the document where references to sustainable development and environmental issues were accepted by all countries. For example, the final document notes that environmental degradation contributes significantly to food insecurity and states that increased food production, which must be undertaken, should happen within the framework of sustainable management of natural resources.

G-77 countries were particularly concerned about the possible use of environmental measures as trade barriers to their food and agricultural exports. In the final document, the international community, in

cooperation with governments and civil society,² pledge, as appropriate, to make every effort to ensure that environmental measures do not unfairly affect market access for developing countries' food and agricultural exports.

Population Stabilization

The United States and many other countries sought language committing countries to take population concerns into account when developing economic and social development plans. However, a very small but vocal group of developing countries, taking a very narrowly focused view of what is involved to achieve food security, insisted that there was no relationship between food security and population stabilization and, therefore, no reference to population should be in the document. Some of the same countries were also not willing to accept references to reproductive health on the grounds, as they define it, such language could involve abortions.

The U.S. delegation and others argued that the ability to reconcile food needs with the constraints imposed on food production by natural resource endowments and environmental degradation argues strongly for continuing the recent slowing of population growth with the goal of eventually stabilizing population. The United States also argued that integrating population and reproductive health strategies is key to addressing the cycle of frequent pregnancies and increasing child care demands that diminish a woman's capacity to provide a nutritional diet for her family or take advantage of new technologies or market opportunities to improve food security. According to a U.S. official, the U.S. approach was consistent with language agreed to in previous international conferences that recognized that population programs and reproductive health care are an integral part of social, economic, and cultural development, which focuses on meeting the needs of individual men and women and improving the quality of life of all people.

At the end of the October 1996 negotiating session, the small group of opponents agreed to endorse language on population and reproductive health with reference to the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. That conference included the reservations of some governments on reproductive health language. Thus, the final document includes references to population policies, family planning, and reproductive health.

²Civil society is a term that includes individuals, corporations, and NGOs.

Resource Commitments

In July, 1966, G-77 interventions focused on declining official development assistance (ODA) grants and loans as the reason for continuing food insecurity. The United States initially found it difficult to refocus the discussion on what it felt were the more important roles of policy and private foreign and domestic investments. In September, G-77 countries supported language that directed specific attention to falling levels of ODA in recent years and that would commit developed countries to fully complying with an ODA target of 0.7 percent of the gross national product (GNP) that was adopted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the 1970s without U.S. participation. G-77 supported language whereby governments would commit, in cooperation with international and private financing institutions, to reverse a falling trend in international funding commitments to agricultural development and to reach and maintain an investment flow of \$15 billion annually by 2010. In addition, G-77 supported language that would have committed member countries to resolving the external debt problems of the developing countries.

The United States was opposed to the ODA language on the grounds that ODA is only one, and not the major, source of funding for food security and that the World Food Summit is not a pledging conference. A compromise on ODA was agreed to whereby governments would commit to strengthen efforts toward fulfilling the ODA target. The United States gave notice that it would not oppose inclusion of this agreement in the document but that the United States would file an interpretive statement concerning it. CFS members agreed to drop text calling for attaining a specific level of investment in agricultural development.

Still bracketed at the end of September was text whereby governments would commit to "mobilize adequate" resources to support national efforts for the earliest possible achievement of sustainable world food security. This text, or similar language, was dropped from the completed text agreed to at the end of October.

With regard to debt relief, the United States opposed language to convert the least-developed countries' external debt to implement summit commitments. In September, compromise language was agreed to whereby member countries will endeavor to mobilize and optimize the use of technical resources from all sources, including debt relief, in order to raise investment to the levels needed to contribute to food security.

Target Dates for Achieving Food Security

The draft text for the September negotiations included bracketed text proposing that countries commit to reduce by 2010 the number of undernourished people in the world to half their present level and to eradicate hunger in countries, within one generation. G-77 urged adoption of all targets, while most OECD countries expressed skepticism. The United States was opposed on the grounds that the targets were not realistic. During the September negotiations, members agreed to compromise language for the plan of action whereby members envisaged reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015 and a midterm review to ascertain whether it is possible to achieve this target by 2010. U.S. officials believe that achieving the 2015 target is possible but would be difficult. The compromise language did not include any target date for complete elimination of hunger.

Trade Liberalization

As previously discussed, the United States favors a document that commits member states to pursue further trade liberalization to maximize the potential for economic growth and to realize the benefits of comparative advantage. However, in July 1996, China, Japan, and South Korea emphasized a need to protect domestic production. Further, many delegations said that domestic production must increase and that trade-restrictive measures were essential and valid to achieve this purpose. Japan, South Korea, Switzerland, and the European Union proposed including various types of language that would allow countries to make use of trade protectionist measures. In the U.S. view, doing so would represent a step backwards from what was achieved in the Uruguay Round trade agreement. During July, the United States, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, with support from exporting G-77 countries, introduced language on trade liberalization and the benefits to food security of an open trading system. Latin American group members pushed for trade negotiations that would be based on the effective removal of subsidies and barriers that distort trade. North American members—the United States and Canada—proposed strengthening language on export subsidy restrictions, and the European Union proposed deleting such language. The European Union members indicated some concern that trade liberalization references would define the basis for future World Trade Organization (WTO) agriculture negotiations, and Japan indicated it was against supporting further trade negotiations.

During July, Switzerland proposed, with considerable support from others, language to ensure the compatibility of food and agricultural trade policies with the sustainable management of natural resources. However, the

United States, Canada, and South-West Pacific countries noted that trade and environment discussions were underway in the WTO and OECD and their outcome should not be prejudged in the summit.

The September negotiations on the trade commitment were very contentious. The United States sought to get all of the protectionist-type language dropped from the text. In addition, the United States and others argued that the trade text focused too much on agriculture and that countries should look at overall trading opportunities and the trading system more broadly. However, the protectionist countries did not yield on most of their proposed text. As a result, the section on trade remained heavily bracketed.

The final text agreed to at the end of October essentially dropped all references to an agreement to promote further trade liberalization. A statement that trade generates economic efficiencies from comparative advantages was revised to eliminate direct reference to comparative advantage. However, the document discusses the positive role of trade in contributing to food security and states it is essential that all members of WTO respect and fulfill the totality of undertakings of the Uruguay Round. Governments also commit to supporting the continuation of the reform process underway as a result of the Uruguay Round. According to U.S. officials, the document dropped or adequately revised all of the language that might have been used to justify trade protectionist measures.

The completed document dropped language urging all countries to refrain from using export restrictions that limit the access of trading partners to agricultural products but includes language stating that food-exporting countries should act as reliable sources of supplies to their trading partners and give due consideration to the food security of importing countries, especially the low-income, food-deficit countries. The document urges WTO members to refrain from using export restrictions in accordance with the WTO Agreement on Agriculture. The document also dropped language whereby countries would commit to eventually eliminating subsidies on food exports to developing countries that undermine production in those countries. It kept language reaffirming that countries would reduce subsidies on food exports in conformity with the Uruguay Round agreement.

Implementing the Marrakesh Decision and Taking Other Measures to Address the Negative Impacts of Price Instability

The 1994 Uruguay Round trade agreement included a written understanding reached by trade ministers in Marrakesh, Morocco, on April 15, 1994. Commonly referred to as the "Marrakesh Decision," the understanding recognized that during implementation of the Uruguay Round agricultural trade reform program, least-developed and net food-importing countries might experience negative effects in terms of the availability of adequate supplies of basic foodstuffs from external sources on reasonable terms and conditions, including short-term difficulties in financing of normal levels of commercial imports. As a result, the ministers agreed to establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure that implementation of the reforms does not adversely affect the availability of food aid at a level that is sufficient to continue to provide assistance in meeting the food needs of developing countries, especially least-developed and net food-importing developing countries. To this end, the ministers agreed to do the following:

- to review the level of food aid established periodically by Committee on Food under the Food Aid Convention of 1986 and to initiate negotiations in the appropriate forum to establish a level of food aid commitments sufficient to meet the legitimate needs of developing countries during the reform program;
- to adopt guidelines to ensure that an increasing proportion of basic foodstuffs is provided to least-developed and net food-importing countries in fully grant form and/or on appropriate concessional terms in line with article IV of the Food Aid Convention of 1986; and
- to give full consideration in the context of their aid programs to requests for the provision of technical and financial assistance to least-developed and net food-importing developing countries to improve their agricultural productivity and infrastructure.

The ministers also recognized that as a result of the Uruguay Round, certain developing countries might experience short-term difficulties in financing normal levels of commercial imports and that in order to address such financing difficulties, these countries might be eligible to draw on the resources of international financial institutions under existing facilities, or such facilities as might be established.

The agreement further specified that the provisions of the decision would be subject to regular review by the WTO Ministerial Conference and that follow-up to the decision would be monitored by the WTO's Committee on Agriculture.

During the July negotiations, it was argued that countries that must import should receive protection from "price vulnerability," and debate was intense over the Marrakesh commitment to aid net food importers who might be hurt by price increases related to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Most groups wanted to make every effort to implement the decision, while the United States and Canada suggested that WTO members take appropriate steps to follow up on the decision. North American members also opposed language on safeguards for unstable world prices, instead proposing WTO-compatible language on the ability of importing countries to purchase adequate supplies of basic foodstuffs from external sources on reasonable terms and conditions.

During the September negotiations on the World Food Summit documents, the G-77 countries sought approval of language committing countries either to implementation or early implementation of the Marrakesh Decision and of language that would ensure that international financial institutions would help the least-developed and net food-importing developing countries meet their short-term difficulties in financing essential food imports. The G-77 attributed recently high world grain prices to Uruguay Round agricultural reforms. The United States recognized that recent market prices for grains had adversely affected the least-developed and net food-importing countries but opposed the proposed language on the ground that the Uruguay Round reforms were just beginning to be implemented and thus it was too early for the reforms to have had any measurable adverse effects.

The United States was concerned that language calling for implementation of the agreement suggested that adverse impacts had already occurred and that corrective action was needed. As a result, the United States supported alternative language that the Marrakesh Decision should be "effectively applied." No agreement was reached on this issue. With regard to the action of international financial institutions, CFS members agreed to replace the term "ensure" with "encourage." In the end-of-October negotiations, the United States agreed to accept language that the decision be fully implemented within WTO.

The European Union, Japan, and the G-77 also supported other language whereby governments would commit to take necessary steps to minimize the possible negative effects of price instability on food-importing countries, including basic foodstuffs. The United States did not endorse the proposed language, since it might raise expectations for creating international reserves, international commodity agreements, increased

food aid, or other assistance. This language remained bracketed at the end of September. The agreed-upon text at the end of October dropped references to governments and the international community taking necessary steps to mitigate possible negative effects of world price instability on food imports. But the agreement states that governments and the international community, recognizing the effects of world price fluctuations, will examine WTO-compatible options and take any appropriate steps to safeguard the ability of importing countries, especially low-income, food-deficit countries, to purchase adequate supplies of basic foodstuffs from external sources on reasonable terms and conditions.

Hunger Maps

The draft plan of action included a proposal, supported by Japan, the G-77, and FAO, that governments, in cooperation with civil societies and international organizations, prepare as quickly as possible and update thereafter "hunger maps" for each low-income, food-deficit country and for other countries and regions vulnerable to food emergencies. The concept of a hunger map was introduced at a January 1996 meeting of CFS as a means to better assess and monitor the food security situation in various parts of the world, as well as to raise awareness of the problem. According to an FAO Secretariat study, current information available to FAO would allow hunger mapping only at the national level and would not allow for identification of (1) dispersion and identification of hungry people within a country, (2) energy deficiencies of a transitional or seasonal nature, or (3) trends linked to changes in the pattern of food distribution. The United States and a number of other developed countries were concerned that CFS might approve a new data system that was not fully thought out and that would duplicate existing information developed by other programs, such as those in the World Food Program and the World Health Organization, as well as FAO. And they wanted to ensure that all relevant institutions would be involved.

During the September negotiations, it was agreed to use the term "food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping system" in place of "hunger maps." It was further agreed that emphasis would be placed on analysis and effective coordination among international and national agencies, including making maximum use of existing data and information systems. It was also agreed that subsequent technical consultation meetings would deal with the full definition of various types of hunger maps.

Summit Follow-Up and Coordination Within the U.N. Agencies

Governments agreed that they will (1) develop national action plans for implementing the summit plan of action, including establishing or improving national mechanisms to set priorities; (2) develop, implement, and monitor the components of action within designated time frames, based both on national and local needs; and (3) provide the necessary resources for their functioning. The final text also states that within the global framework, governments should cooperate actively with one another and with U.N. organizations, financial institutions, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, and public and private sectors on programs directed toward the achievement of food security for all.

An important issue arose regarding the mandate to be given to FAO and coordination within the U.N. system for international-level monitoring and follow-up after the summit. One set of proposals favored by FAO and the G-77 countries would have given FAO lead responsibility in cooperation with other U.N. bodies but would not have required involvement of the U.N. Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). ACC is the U.N. committee tasked with coordination and integrated follow-up to U.N.-sponsored conferences in the U.N. system. An alternative set of proposals would have ensured FAO leadership of follow-up within the U.N. agencies, but also would have required that the ACC coordinate follow-up within the U.N. system consistent with its role in other recent international conferences. The United States and many other countries felt that ACC must be involved to secure the necessary level of cooperation required from other U.N. bodies. Text on this issue remained bracketed at the end of September, but U.S. officials thought that substantial progress had been made in clarifying the issue and that the latter approach would eventually be approved.

The text agreed to at the end of October notes that the international community and the U.N. system, including FAO, as well as other agencies and bodies according to their mandate, contributed greatly to the implementation of the World Food Summit plan of action. The text states that the member governments through CFS will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the plan of action. The ACC is invited to ensure appropriate interagency coordination and, when considering the Chair of any ACC mechanisms for interagency follow-up to the World Food Summit, to recognize the major role of FAO in the field of food security, within its mandate. The text dropped language stating that any ad hoc ACC mechanism considered to promote interagency follow-up on food security must be led by FAO.

In terms of follow-up, the completed text calls upon governments to establish or improve national mechanisms to set priorities; develop, implement, and monitor the components of action for food security within designated time frames, based on national and local needs; and provide the necessary resources for their functioning. Governments, in cooperation among themselves and with international institutions, will start in 1997 to review the adequacy and effectiveness of the allocation and use of financial and human resources for action required to ensure food for all as a follow-up to the World Food Summit and will reallocate available resources accordingly, with special reference to the needs of countries facing deteriorating food security, nutrition, health, and resource.

At the end of October, CFS members agreed on a number of specific actions to be taken to increase the likelihood that the plan of action will lead to useful and measurable results. Accordingly, the text states that in partnership with all actors of civil society and in coordination with relevant international institutions, governments will take the following actions:

- Establish, through the CFS, a timetable; procedures; and standardized reporting formats, which do not duplicate similar reports to the U.N., FAO and other agencies, on the national, subregional, and regional implementation of the World Food Summit plan of action.
- Set out in CFS a process for developing targets and verifiable indicators of national and global food security where they do not exist.
- Report to CFS on national, subregional, and regional implementation of the World Food Summit plan of action, drawing on a food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping system, once established, as an analytical aid.
- Monitor, through the CFS, the national, subregional and regional implementation of the World Food Summit plan of action, using reports from national governments, reports on U.N. agency follow-up and inter-agency coordination, and information from other relevant international institutions.
- Encourage the effective participation of relevant actors of civil society in the CFS monitoring process, recognizing their critical role in enhancing food security.
- By 2006, undertake in CFS and within available resources a major broad-based progress assessment of the implementation of the World Food Summit plan of action and a mid-term review of achieving the target

**Appendix IV
Key Issues That Have Arisen During the
Negotiations**

of reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015.

The Role of NGOs in Preparations for the World Food Summit

This appendix discusses how NGOs¹ were invited to participate in preparations for the World Food Summit. It presents views that were adopted by a large group of NGOs from around the world that participated in a global consultation and relates these views to the U.S. position for the summit. We do not comment on the merits of the views expressed. In addition, this appendix discusses views some U.S. NGOs shared with us concerning how the U.S. government involved them in the process.

Similar to other recent international conferences and summits of world leaders, and consistent with the summit's objective of producing a policy declaration and plan of action for implementation by all concerned parties, FAO sought wide participation by interested NGOs in preparations for the summit. NGOs, along with governments and other civil society actors, were seen as having a very important role to play in analyzing problems of food insecurity and proposing remedial action at various levels. These levels ranged from international and national policy-making to planning, implementing, and monitoring activities related to food security at the local level.

In January 1996, FAO invited NGOs to participate in the summit preparatory process by (1) providing comments on the technical papers prepared for the summit, (2) exchanging information and promoting dialogue on food security issues, and (3) providing feedback on the plan of action and identifying areas of concern for follow-up action by NGOs at the national and international level. NGOs were especially asked to share their experience with food security problems and programs based on their development work, particularly at the grassroots level and with poor communities. In inviting NGOs to participate, FAO said that given the wide diversity of NGOs and their many interests, all NGOs would not be expected to agree on a common position. However, they were encouraged to at least group themselves into "caucuses."

At the national level, NGOs were invited to work with the national secretariat or committee established by the government in each country to coordinate summit preparations. They were also encouraged to promote seminars, workshops, and symposiums or roundtables on the summit's main issues. At the regional level, NGOs were invited to provide input to the FAO regional conferences. Before each regional conference, a 2-day NGO meeting was held. NGOs agreed on concerted positions, recommendations, and declarations that were presented to the conferences. NGOs attended

¹Some NGOs are international, meaning that they operate in two or more countries and have an international organization.

the conferences either as members of their respective national delegations² or as observers. Reports on the results of the regional NGO meetings were prepared by the Secretariat and distributed to interested parties. NGOs were also invited to participate in the Inter-Sessional Working Group meetings as observers.

At the global level, NGOs were invited to attend a 3-day consultation, September 19-21, just before the CFS scheduled September 23-27 meeting. The main objective was to enable participants to discuss the draft policy statement and plan of action and to produce concrete proposals concerning them for CFS. FAO anticipated that the CFS session would be the last negotiating forum for the draft and thus the final opportunity to provide input to the document before its submission to heads of state and government for approval at the summit. The NGOs' September forum and key views that they expressed to CFS at that time are separately discussed in a later section of this report.

With regard to the summit itself, NGOs were invited to participate if selected to serve on their respective national delegations. In addition, FAO invited a group of relevant and competent NGOs to participate as observers. FAO said it would not be able to accredit all NGOs that might like to attend due to space constraints. National NGOs were encouraged to seek representation through their international federations or networks. Preference is being given to those NGOs that have previously worked with FAO and those that participated in the preparatory work.

The costs of holding the NGO forums and September consultation were financed by voluntary contributions from governments and private sector organizations that were paid into a special trust fund set up by FAO. According to the Secretary-General of the World Food Summit, FAO's budget has not been used to finance these costs.

NGOs are holding a special forum, beginning 2 days before the start of the summit and continuing throughout the period of the summit. The forum is being hosted by Italian NGOs and paid for by voluntary contributions from the Italian government and others. During the first 2 days the NGOs will review the completed policy declaration and plan of action and seek to reach consensus on a statement that they will present to the summit itself. During the summit, NGOs plan to hold workshops and discussions on various aspects of food security, to network with one another and country delegations, and to attend summit sessions.

²Each country's government decided whether to include NGOs on its delegation.

Involvement of U.S. NGOs in Preparations for the Summit

The U.S. government assigned one official as a liaison to U.S. NGOs to encourage and help facilitate their participation in the process leading up to the summit. The principal vehicle used to secure NGO views on food security issues was two public forums, where NGOs were invited to comment on drafts of the U.S. government position paper and the U.S.-Canada North American position paper.

On June 3, 1996, an open forum was held at USDA headquarters in Washington, D.C., to receive comments on a May 17 draft of the U.S. government's position paper. Forty-seven U.S. NGOs provided formal comments on the paper. The forum was led by officials from USDA, the State Department, and USAID. Successive panels of NGO representatives (typically four to five in a panel) were held, with representatives orally summarizing their organizations' comments and views. (Most NGOs also presented written statements for the record.) A limited amount of time was allowed for discussion between the U.S. officials and the panels.

On June 24 and 25, an open U.S.-Canadian forum was held in East Lansing, Michigan, to receive comments from NGOs and the public on a draft of the North American paper. More than 20 NGOs and interested persons provided formal comments on the paper. In addition, during the 2 days before the forum, some 35 U.S. and Canadian NGOs met to discuss the draft and prepare a statement of key points. Their statement was presented to the forum.

Both forums presented a variety of critical comments and concerns regarding the draft papers. Among some of the critical comments made at the June 3 forum were the following:

- The paper focuses too much on government policy and actions and not enough on the individual and local community.
- The paper is too complacent about the treatment of U.S. domestic food security.
- The United States is not sufficiently proactive in considering alternative food reserve schemes at the international and national levels.
- The paper stresses agriculture, but U.S. foreign assistance allocations do not reflect the same emphasis.
- The paper does not adequately address the importance of soil and water management.
- Countries that have trade policies that discriminate between domestic and export demand are causing food insecurity in importing countries.

U.S. officials recorded the views of NGOs at the public forums. Following the meetings, the core group summarized the comments, assessed their content, and reported the results to IWG. The core group recommended that some changes be made to the U.S. position paper, and U.S. officials told us that some of the recommended changes were implemented. The core group concluded that some of the NGO comments were too specific to be included in the paper and that others were not appropriate.

U.S. NGOs had a number of other opportunities to express their views. For example, some NGOs were invited to attend small meetings with U.S. officials where discussions were held on at least some aspects of food security. Some of these meetings took place before the public forums. In addition, the core group held periodic briefings for NGOs and the public more generally on the progress of preparations for the summit. NGOs were able to raise questions at the briefings. Also, as was the case with other NGOs, U.S. NGOs could attend meetings of FAO's Inter-Sessional Working Group and of CFS.

Twenty-three U.S. NGOs attended the September 19-21 global NGO consultation on the draft policy statement and plan of action, immediately prior to the negotiation session on the draft plan of action and policy statement by CFS. A number of these NGOs stayed on to observe and to try to influence the outcome of the negotiations.

During the week of negotiations, the U.S. delegation held a daily briefing for the U.S. NGOs to advise them of the status of the talks and to listen to their concerns and views. U.S. NGOs were unhappy that none of them were on the U.S. delegation, as was the case with some of the other country delegations (e.g., Canada had included three of its NGOs). Part-way through the week, the U.S. delegation invited the U.S. NGOs to nominate two of the U.S. NGO representatives to attend morning U.S. strategy sessions. The U.S. NGOs did so. In addition, the U.S. delegation agreed to consider suggestions from the various U.S. NGOs on proposed language changes with respect to text in the plan of action. On a number of occasions, U.S. officials told NGOs that their suggestions had been helpful and used by the United States in the negotiations.

On October 25, 1996, USDA announced that 10 individuals from the private sector had been selected to accompany the U.S. delegation to the summit. They will advise the delegation, participate in negotiations of World Food Summit documents, and attend the NGO forum and related activities.

According to USDA, the three cochairs of the IWG made the selections, and the selection process was designed to ensure representation of various groups that have a stake in world food security issues. The organizations represented include AFRICARE; Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs; Land-O-Lakes, Inc.; McNamara Farms; National Farmers Union; the National Food Processors Association; Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc.; Save the Children; Tuskegee University; and Zero Population Growth.

U.S. NGOs' Views on the
U.S. Effort to Involve
Them in Preparations for
the Summit

We had individual or group discussions with U.S. representatives of 17 NGOs that participated in preparations for the World Food Summit. Of the 17 organizations, 10 sent representatives to the global consultation of NGOs in September 1996 and 7 made presentations at the public forums. Representatives of many of these NGOs had a number of critical comments about how the U.S. government involved NGOs in the preparations. Their biggest complaints were that the U.S. government waited too long before affording them an opportunity to comment in a serious manner on the development of the U.S. government's position papers, did not treat them as full "partners" in the process, and frequently did not seriously consider NGO views when offered.

Many of the U.S. NGOs who were critical of the process told us that they had wanted an opportunity to sit at the table and work side by side with U.S. officials at the start of the process of developing a U.S. position paper for the summit. However, they said, they were never invited to do so. They acknowledged that some NGOs were invited to attend small meetings, including with some high-level officials, before the paper was begun or well developed but said some of the discussions seemed to be more of a monologue than a dialogue and some food security issues could not be discussed. By the time the public forums were held, these NGOs said, the U.S. position was so far along it was not possible for their views to be adequately discussed and considered. They acknowledged that some changes were made to the U.S. paper following the forums but said the changes did not go far enough.

In addition, these NGOs said that they were concerned that their views had been solicited more for pro forma reasons and less for serious substantive consideration. They also suggested that the U.S. officials who organized the process during spring 1996 lacked experience with previous international conferences where, they claimed, U.S. NGOs had been involved in a much more substantive way and with positive results. They also suggested that previous conferences had led U.S. officials to be leary

of working more closely with NGOs in the future because it is troublesome to U.S. officials when disagreements occur.

As discussed on page 47, many of the key points expressed by NGOs (not just U.S. NGOs) at the September 19-21 consultative session differed significantly from the substantive positions adopted by the U.S. government. U.S. NGOs that participated in the consultation generally agreed with the key points adopted by the NGO forum.³ Therefore, the dissatisfaction of those NGOs who were critical of the U.S. process may be partly a result of the significant difference in views. For example, if U.S. NGOs had been invited to sit at the table with the U.S. core team at the start of the development of the U.S. position paper, NGOs might have come away from the process nearly as dissatisfied—assuming the U.S. government did not significantly change its views during the process.

U.S. Government Views on the Involvement of NGOs

U.S. officials expressed surprise when advised that a number of the NGOs were critical of how the U.S. government had involved NGOs in preparations for the summit, including the preparation of the U.S. position paper. The officials told us that they themselves had been disappointed by the level of participation by U.S. NGOs in preparations for the summit.

For example, U.S. officials said that in general U.S. NGOs showed little interest in the summit until about the time the government started preparing for the June 3 forum. The U.S. National Secretary said that his recollection was that only one NGO showed up for a briefing held in early 1996, even though the event had been published in the Federal Register and faxes had been sent to many known NGOs. In addition, he said, during the first 5 months of 1996, he averaged only a few telephone calls a month from NGOs and these calls did not express any real concern about the process for securing NGOs' views. The official appointed to liaise with U.S. NGOs observed that although more than 300 NGOs are accredited to USAID alone, less than 25 U.S. NGOs attended the September global consultation. In addition, he said, some key umbrella-like organizations that interact with many NGOs had shown little interest in the summit. U.S. officials also expressed disappointment with a relative lack of interest on the part of farm and commodity groups, major environmental and population organizations, trade groups, and big business.

³One U.S. NGO disagreed with the vote on the overall document. At least one other U.S. NGO was not present for the vote. As discussed later, the document noted that not every participant necessarily endorsed every point as formulated. Representatives of several U.S. NGOs told us that while they agreed with the general substance of the key points statement, the tone of the document was stronger than they would have preferred.

U.S. officials acknowledged that NGOs had not been invited to sit at the table with the government in the actual drafting of the paper. However, the officials said that they had worked hard to advise interested NGOs of the types of views that were being considered by government drafters for inclusion in the position paper and to secure the reaction of the NGOs. According to the officials, a number of meetings were held with interested NGOs for this purpose.

U.S. officials speculated on a number of possible reasons as to why NGO participation was not stronger but could not offer a definitive conclusion on this matter.

U.S. officials said NGOs' interest in the summit had increased somewhat following the September NGO global consultation. For example, they said, a wider variety of NGOs showed up for an October 17 briefing on the summit. In addition, in late October, the Secretary of Agriculture received three letters, each representing a considerable number and variety of organizations, providing views on the U.S. position for the summit. Among other things, these letters reflected concern with the positions against trade expressed by NGOs at the global consultation (see discussion in the next section). All of the letters offered support for existing trade agreements, and two of the letters supported the U.S. government's position favoring further trade liberalization. Two of the letters also urged U.S. support for a variety of other policies and programs to promote food security in developing countries.

Key Positions Conveyed by NGOs to CFS in September 1996

During September 19-21, 1996, more than 200 NGOs or civil society organizations from more than 83 countries and all regions of the world met in Rome at the invitation of FAO for a consultation on the World Food Summit. The purpose was to provide views to CFS' draft policy declaration and plan of action.

According to FAO, the organizations represented a wide variety of groups.⁴ According to our analysis of a provisional list of the participants, however,

⁴The variety of groups included farmers, peasants, farmworkers, fisherfolk, indigenous communities, herders, consumers, urban poor people, children's rights activists, urban communities, industrialists, emergency aid workers, legal workers, AIDS solidarity advocates, commerce, food workers, scouts, gender equality advocates, urban workers, family advocates, human rights advocates, antihunger advocates, university professors, researchers, social workers, breastfeeding advocates, organic and conventional agriculture advocates, agroecological and sustainable agriculture advocates, the international press, service clubs, peace advocates, education workers, cooperatives, academics, voluntary workers, nongovernmental organization networks, mothers, the private enterprise sector, foodgrain banks, health workers, religious groups, fair trade advocates, environmentalists, nutrition workers, and women, children and youth organizations of civil society.

most countries were represented by only one or two NGOs. However, Italy was represented by 63 NGOs (perhaps because Italy was the host country for the forum), the United States by 23, the United Kingdom by 15, France by 10, Belgium and the Netherlands by 8, Canada by 7, and Germany and Switzerland by 6. In addition, Brazil, Japan, Mexico, and the Philippines were represented by five NGOs; India, Spain, and Venezuela by four; and Bangladesh, Egypt, Kenya, Malaysia, Senegal, Sudan, and Turkey by three.

During the consultation, participants formed working groups to review different parts of the draft policy declaration and plan of action. Each group prepared recommended changes to the text of the document for which it was responsible. In addition, NGOs decided to issue an overall statement of their own in response to the positions expressed in the draft CFS documents. Each working group prepared a set of key points for its part of the document. On the final night of the session, all of the participants met to discuss and debate the various sets of key points. Changes were agreed upon, and an overwhelming majority of the NGOs voted to approve 29 key substantive points.⁵ The document was formally conveyed to CFS when it met in plenary session on September 23.

Specific proposals of the working groups for amending the text of the draft policy statement and plan of action were consolidated in English only. There was not sufficient time for FAO to have these proposals translated into several languages for discussion and approval by NGOs in plenary session. As a result, these proposals were informally made available to CFS as additional input to the negotiating process.

A number of NGOs' key points appear to be consistent with U.S. views on food security and with views CFS provisionally approved on September 30. However, a considerable number of the NGOs' key points disagree in part or in whole with key U.S. views on food security.

NGOs' Views That Differed Significantly From the U.S. Position on Food Security

NGOs' at the September 1996 global consultation presented significantly different views from the United States on the operation of economic markets, comparative advantage, self-sufficiency, trade liberalization, public and private investment (including the level of ODA), international food reserves, and the Marrekesh Decision. Other issues on which NGOs expressed at least partially different views include structural adjustment programs and debt forgiveness and food reserves.

⁵The document noted that "as is usual when large assemblies adopt substantive statements, not every participant can necessarily endorse every point as formulated."

Reliance on Markets, Comparative Advantage, and Self-Sufficiency

NGOs did not fully subscribe to reliance on free markets. On the one hand, they said governments should support small-scale producers and farms that are economically sound. On the other hand, they said that food security is a human right that must take precedence over the dictates of the marketplace. In addition, they favored public regulation of food prices in urban areas and establishment of a decentralized system of local, national, and regional food reserves for staple crops that would be used to stabilize prices of staple foods.

NGOs also did not fully endorse the view that countries should produce those things in which they have a comparative advantage and rely on trade to obtain those goods for which they lack a comparative advantage. According to the NGO statement, developing countries are often forced to import food from overseas, so their food security is subject to the vagaries of the international market. Developing countries should strive to achieve self-sufficiency in basic food staples, NGOs said. In addition, the NGO statement said that when the Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture expires in 2000, it must be renegotiated to ensure the exemption of all staple food crops from trade liberalization commitments, in support of the sovereign right of countries to protect their national food self-sufficiency.

To help promote self-sufficiency, NGOs urged governments to "directly support" small farmers and fisherfolk, promoting their productivity, since they are responsible for most food staple production. The NGO statement did not define what is covered by the term "directly support." However, a representative of one NGO said that he understood the point to mean that governments should target their agricultural support policies toward small farmers. For example, he said, agricultural extension agents in developing countries often concentrate on larger producers. The term does not necessarily mean that governments should subsidize small producers, he said, although it could include subsidies. Regarding the latter, he noted that governments in major agricultural producing and exporting countries have subsidized their producers.

Trade Liberalization

According to NGOs, "international trade liberalization is not the solution to the problem of food security and, in many cases, undermines it." In many countries, the NGOs said, trade agreements have driven farmers and farmworkers, especially women, off the land, creating national and regional dependency on food imports for future generations. According to NGOs, international agricultural trade is dominated by a small number of transnational companies, and their market power enables them to

compete unfairly with local food producers in developing countries. For example, according to NGOs,

"four food companies control the vast majority of the global grain trade..... Similarly, a small number of companies control virtually every agricultural commodity—a trend which will worsen as global agribusiness substitutes developing country commodity exports with biotechnologically engineered products. The monopolistic position of these companies impedes the development of local food markets and in fact is rapidly displacing them in many regions of the world as trade liberalization proceeds. Therefore, we urge governments to establish regulations in a code of conduct restricting such practices by transnational corporations."

In addition, NGOs indicated that the transnational corporations are benefiting from reliance on "unsustainable practices." These practices were not explicitly defined. However, elsewhere in their key points, NGOs said that they favored "socially and ecologically fair trade." A representative of one NGO told us that the latter means, for example, that companies should not employ child labor in producing their goods or unsafe environmental practices. Companies that do so, the representative said, have reduced costs and thus can compete unfairly with companies that observe good social and ecological practices.

Consistent with their view that trade liberalization is harming food security, NGOs called upon governments to put a freeze on the implementation of further agricultural liberalization until after a thorough study of the impacts of the Uruguay Round and other trade agreements is undertaken. Furthermore, as the Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture expires in the year 2000, they said, it must be renegotiated with a comprehensive food security clause ensuring the exemption of all staple food crops from trade liberalization commitments.

Investment and and Resource Commitments

NGOs expressed the view that all donor nations should immediately comply with the OECD target of committing 0.7 percent of GNP to ODA and should restore the share of ODA allocated to food security objectives. According to NGOs, ODA has to be separated from private international investment because the goals of each are different, and even in areas where private international investment is necessary, the investment has to be strongly regulated.

As previously discussed, the United States has never subscribed to the OECD target of 0.7 percent of GNP. The United States believes that ODA is

important but also believes that only the international private sector is capable of generating most of the developing countries' needs for investment from external sources.

Implementation of the Marrakesh Decision

NGOs called for implementation of the Marrakesh Decision without commenting specifically on whether they thought the Uruguay Round had already adversely affected the least developed and net food-importing countries. As discussed earlier, the United States had opposed language for the plan calling for implementation, or early implementation of the decision, while supporting language that the decision be "effectively applied." However, the United States eventually agreed to language for full implementation.

Other NGO Views

Structural Adjustment Programs and Debt Forgiveness

According to NGOs, poverty in the developing countries results from, among other causes, structural adjustment programs and external debt. Structural adjustment programs and external debt of the developing countries are seriously limiting the achievement of food security, they said, and thus need to be reconsidered. NGOs said that in some cases structural adjustment programs promoted by international financial institutions endanger access to land, water, sanitation, food, and nutrition and should be renegotiated to ensure consistency with the right to safe food for all. Regarding debt, NGOs said, cancellations should be implemented, especially for the least-developed countries. Otherwise, NGOs said, governments of the countries will have to continue converting agriculture from domestic food production to cash crops for export to generate foreign exchange, directly aggravating food shortages and import dependence while increasing environmental degradation.

As discussed earlier, the U.S. view is that countries that have demonstrated the most progress in achieving food security are those that have seriously pursued policy reform, macroeconomic stabilization, and structural adjustment. At the same time, the United States has joined other CFS members in endorsing language whereby countries and international financial institutions will cooperate among themselves to make every effort to ensure that food security and poverty eradication goals and

programs are safeguarded in difficult times of economic transition, budget austerity, and structural adjustment.

Regarding debt relief, the United States and other members have agreed on language to intensify the search for practical and effective solutions to debt problems of developing countries. They also support the recent initiatives of international financial institutions to reduce the total external debt burden of heavily indebted poor countries.

Food Reserves

As mentioned earlier, NGOs said they favor the establishment of a decentralized system of local, national, and regional food reserves for staple crops that would be used to stabilize prices of staple foods. In addition, NGOs said that national and international food reserves that are freely accessible are essential for states and communities to exercise food sovereignty. NGOs did not specify who should pay for the establishment of such reserves or how such reserves would be controlled to ensure that adequate supplies would be produced to meet regular demand. However, they did say that priority should be given to mobilizing and using local resources in creating food reserves (as well as emergency food aid) and that international organizations should ensure that small farmers' organizations can compete on an equal footing with local commercial interests when purchasing such reserves or food aid.

The United States has supported language for the plan of action whereby governments commit to pursuing at local and national levels, as appropriate, adequate, cost-effective strategic food reserve policies and programs. However, the United States is opposed to the establishment of an international emergency food reserve. In addition, it opposed proposed language for the plan of action that would have supported international organizations, particularly FAO, examining possible international action to ensure an adequate level of global food security reserves. Such language has been dropped from the draft text. According to a U.S. official involved in the negotiations, the United States opposes international food reserves because of the difficulties that would arise in deciding how to finance, hold, and trigger the use of such reserves.